



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN IMPROVING WRITING SKILLS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Abstract : This study looks into how English Language Learners' (ELLs') writing abilities are affected by project-based learning (PBL). The study used a sample of 70 ELL students from two classes which uses a quantitative research design. The students were split into two groups: the experimental group participated in PBL activities, while the control group got traditional training. Pre- and post-tests were used to track gains in a number of writing-related areas, such as vocabulary, grammar, coherence, and overall writing quality. According to the findings, students in the experimental group improved their writing considerably more than those in the control group. The PBL technique was very successful in improving students' capacity to write cohesive essays and employ a variety of terminology, according to statistical analysis. When participating in PBL activities, students also reported being more motivated and engaged in their writing assignments. These results imply that PBL is an effective teaching strategy for ELL students' writing ability development, providing an immersive and participatory learning environment that may be absent from traditional methods. According to the study, including PBL into ELL curricula can improve students' writing and language skills.

Keywords: Writing; Project-based Learning

Abstrak : Studi ini meneliti bagaimana kemampuan menulis Pembelajar Bahasa Inggris (ELL) dipengaruhi oleh pembelajaran berbasis proyek (PBL). Studi ini menggunakan sampel 60 siswa ELL dari dua kelas yang menggunakan desain penelitian kuantitatif. Siswa dibagi menjadi dua kelompok: kelompok eksperimen berpartisipasi dalam aktivitas PBL, sedangkan kelompok kontrol mendapatkan pelatihan tradisional. Tes pra dan pasca digunakan untuk melacak kemajuan dalam sejumlah area terkait penulisan, seperti kosakata, tata bahasa, koherensi, dan kualitas penulisan secara keseluruhan. Menurut temuan tersebut, siswa dalam kelompok eksperimen meningkatkan kemampuan menulis mereka jauh lebih banyak daripada mereka yang berada dalam kelompok kontrol. Teknik PBL sangat berhasil dalam meningkatkan kapasitas siswa untuk menulis esai yang kohesif dan menggunakan berbagai terminologi, menurut analisis statistik. Ketika berpartisipasi dalam aktivitas PBL, siswa juga melaporkan menjadi lebih termotivasi dan terlibat dalam tugas menulis mereka. Hasil ini menyiratkan bahwa PBL merupakan strategi pengajaran yang efektif untuk pengembangan kemampuan menulis siswa ELL, menyediakan lingkungan belajar yang mendalam dan partisipatif yang mungkin tidak ada dalam metode tradisional. Menurut penelitian, memasukkan PBL ke dalam kurikulum ELL dapat meningkatkan keterampilan menulis dan bahasa siswa.

Kata Kunci : *Menulis; Pembelajaran berbasis Proyek*

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, the success of teaching learning sometimes depends on the teaching method strategies. Both in the form of strategies, methods, and those related to administration or design of learning implementation (Mahmawati, 2024). An essential feature of language education is the development of competent writing abilities, especially for English Language Learners (ELLs). In the English teaching, writing is one of the communication skills that need to be developed in the classroom (Hidayat, 2024). Proficiency in writing not only contributes to efficient communication but is essential for both academic performance and potential career advancement. The acquisition of proficient writing skills is widely acknowledged as a fundamental aspect of students' academic and professional success (Novitaningrum, 2024). Also, for translating, because translation is the act of presenting one nation's culture to another nation (Yusuf, 2024). Conventional writing instruction, which frequently places an emphasis on memorization and repeated exercises, has come under fire for failing to interest pupils or foster higher order thinking abilities. Innovative educational strategies like Project-Based Learning (PBL) have gained popularity in response to these issues.

Through the completion of meaningful and life-relevant projects, students are encouraged to study and apply knowledge through the use of project-based learning as an instructional tool. Active learning, critical thinking, teamwork, and useful problem-solving skills are all encouraged by PBL. These qualities make it a potentially effective tool for improving writing abilities among English Language Learners (ELLs), who frequently have particular difficulties in understanding English writing because of disparities in their linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds.

Notwithstanding PBL's theoretical benefits, there is currently little actual data demonstrating how well it works to help ELLs develop their writing abilities. By performing a quantitative examination of PBL's effect on English language learners' writing skill, this study seeks to close this gap. This study aims to give solid evidence on whether PBL, as opposed to conventional teaching techniques, may considerably improve writing skills through the use of standardized assessments and statistical approaches.

The study is predicated on the idea that PBL will cause quantifiable gains in writing performance by involving students in collaborative projects and real-world writing assignments. To comprehend the dynamics of how PBL effects writing development, important aspects like students' beginning writing proficiency, engagement levels, and attitudes toward writing will be investigated. The results of this study will add to the expanding body of knowledge on cutting-edge teaching strategies and provide useful advice for teachers looking to teach ELL students how to write.

METHOD

The Research Design

This research used quasi experimental research design. This study used pretest-posttest control group design. The design that used aim to find out if effective project based learning to senior high school in investigating the effectiveness of project based learning, two classes of first grade of MA Al Misri Curahmalang are selected. The first-class was used as as an experimental group which acquired some treatments by project based learning the other class was as a control group. The design was quantitative research (quasi experimental research).

Teaching Procedures

The first procedure of the teaching was the researcher gave the pre-test to the two classes. After that, the researcher gave treatment to the experiment and control class with different time. The last, the researcher gave post-test to know whether there was different result after giving treatment or not. For teaching procedure, the experiment class used project based learning and for control class used textbook. And for the teaching technique, the researcher used EEC (Exploration, Elaboration, and Confirmation) for teaching technique. Students began by brainstorming everything they knew about the topic. Students then generated a list of questions about what they wanted to know about the topic, and they have learned the new things.

The Population and Sample

Population

The population in this research was students of first grade of MA Al Misri Curahmalang, Rambipuji.

Sample

In this study, the researcher employed purposive sampling to select participants. A total of 70 students from two classes, Class X IPS 1 and Class X IPS 2, were chosen. A lottery was conducted to determine which class would serve as the experimental group and which would be the control group. As a result, Class X IPS 1 was designated as the experimental group and taught using project-based learning, while Class X IPS 2 served as the control group, following a textbook-based approach.

The Research Instrument

The instrument used in this research was a tool for data collection. In this study, the researcher utilized tests, which consist of a series of questions or tasks designed to assess a specific behavior. According to Ary et al. (2008:201), a test is a set of stimuli presented to an individual to elicit responses that can be scored numerically. The scores from the tests provide insights into the students' achievement related to the content being evaluated.

The aim of this test was to compare the achievements of students taught through project-based learning. The test was designed in a multiple-choice format, as it effectively measured comprehension in reading, which is a receptive skill (Nunan, 1991). The researcher categorized the test into pretest and posttest. To ensure that the test was a valid measure of students' writing abilities, it was essential to demonstrate this validity. The pretest and posttest utilized the same questions; however, the posttest was arranged differently. Both tests were administered in a multiple-choice format with options labeled a, b, c, and d.

Validity

A test was considered to be valid if it measures accurately what was intended to measure. In addition, Airasian (2000:19) states that without validity, the assessment data will not lead to correct decisions. According to (Arikunto, 2006:169), a test is called valid if it can measure what should be measured. The validity could be classified into content validity, criterion related validity, construct validity, and face validity (Brown, 2004:22-27).

Reliability

Fraenkel and Wallen (2006:165), reliability as used in research, refers to the consistency of scores or answer provided by an instrument. Test reliability defines the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it will measure. The more confidence that has score obtained from the administration of a test are essentially the same score. There are two kinds of instruments which should be trusted that all instruments are reliable. Those are reliability analysis of pre test and reliability analysis of post test. Reliability test performed by Alpha cronbach test with the help of spss 15.00 version. According to (Eisingerich and Rubera, 2010 : 27) the minimum of reliability is 0.70. Many researcher used the alpha cronbach test because it could provide support for internal consistency. The output of the reliability could be seen on table 1.

Table 1. Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha Based on		
Cronbach's Alpha	Standardize d Items	N of Items
.874	.871	25

The Technique of Data Collecting

Technique and instruments in data collection were:

The research was conducted in first grade of MA Al Misri Curahmalang that was class IPS 1 and class IPS 2. The research in this study was conducted about two months.

In collecting the data, the following steps were taken:

1. Organizing teaching procedure in the experimental and control group.

2. Making research instruments that consisted of preparing try out test, pretest and post-test.
3. Distributing a try out test to the students out of experimental and control group
4. Administering pre-test to both the experimental and controlled groups to investigate initial abilities between two groups.
5. Organizing lesson plans in teaching writing using project based learning. The experimental group was given treatments by project based learning then the control group was taught by using manual/textbook.
6. Administering post-test to both the control and experimental groups in order to reveal the result of treatment.

The Research Procedure

Administering Pre-Test

As previously mentioned, the pre-test was conducted using a written format. Both the experimental and control groups were instructed to respond to multiple-choice questions based on the provided text. The researcher would then evaluate the responses. The scoring method involved calculating the students' achievements based on their scores.

Conducting the Treatment

After administering the pre-test, the next step was to provide treatment for the experimental group. This treatment involved implementing project-based learning over four sessions to assess the students' abilities with the text. Meanwhile, the control group continued to be taught using non-authentic materials for the same duration.

Administering Post-Test

Equal to pre-test, post-test was held after the treatment to the experimental group. The score of post-test would be used as a final comparison to determine any difference between students' achievement in experimental group and controlled group.

The Technique of Data Analyzing

The next step of the research, the researcher processed and analyzed the data. The researcher analyzed the score pre-test and post-test. This was to find out the differences of students' scores by using project based learning and using manual.

Homogeneity Test

Sugiyono (2013) explains homogeneity test is used to know whether two or more groups in sample data are from population which has the same variety. The procedures of homogeneity test are as follows:

- a. Determining standard of deviation X and Y
- b. Determining F (h) from variant of X and Y
- c. Compare between F (h) and F table
- d. If $F(h) < F \text{ table}$: Homogeneous
If $F(h) > F \text{ table}$: Not Homogeneous

Independent T-Test

The technique of data analyze that was used by the researcher in this research was statistical analysis with T-Test (Sudijino, 2010:325).

The formula was:

$$T_0 = \frac{M1-M2}{SEm1-m2}$$

With the explanation:

M1 : Mean of the differences of Experiment

M2 : Mean of the differences of Controlled Class

SEM1 : Standard error of experiment class

SEM2 : Standard error of controlled class

X : Teaching reading comprehension using authentic materials in experiment class

Y : Teaching reading comprehension using authentic materials in controlled class

The procedures of were calculations as follows:

1. Determining Mean of Variable X:

$$M_1 = \frac{\sum X}{N^1}$$

2. Determining Mean of Variable Y:

$$M_2 = \frac{\sum Y}{N^2}$$

3. Determining Standard of Deviation Score of Variable X:

$$SD_1 = \sqrt{\frac{\sum X^1}{N^1}}$$

4. Determining Standard of Deviation Score of Variable Y:

$$SD_2 = \sqrt{\frac{\sum X^2}{N^2}}$$

5. Determining Standard Error Mean of Variable X:

$$SE_{m1} = \frac{SD_1}{\sqrt{N^1-1}}$$

6. Determining Standard Error Mean of Variable Y:

$$SE_{m2} = \frac{SD_2}{\sqrt{N^2-1}}$$

7. Determining Standard Error of Different Mean of Variable X and Mean of Variable Y, with formula:

$$SE_{m1 - m2} : \sqrt{SE_{m1}^2 - SE_{m2}^2}$$

8. Determining T0 with formula:

$$t_0 = \frac{M_1 - M_2}{SE_{m1-m2}}$$

9. Determining Degrees of Freedom (df), with formula:

$$df = (N_1 + N_2) - 2$$

Hypothesis Testing

The statistical hypothesis of this research could be seen as:

Null Hypothesis: there is no significance influence difference between the students' writing skills through using project based learning and manual/ textbook to the first grade students of MA Al Misri Curahmalang.

Alternative Hypothesis: there is significant influence difference between the students' writing skills through using project based learning and textbook to the first grade students of MA Al Misri Curahmalang and then, the criteria used as follows:

1. If $t\text{-test } (t_o) > t\text{-table } (t_t)$ in significant degree of 0.05, H_o (null hypothesis) is rejected, and H_a (alternative hypothesis) is accepted.
2. If $t\text{-test } (t_o) < t\text{-table } (t_t)$ in significant degree of 0.05, H_o (the null hypothesis) is accepted, and H_a (alternative hypothesis) is rejected.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Result

The Description of the Data

The experimental and control classes were taught using different materials for writing instruction. The experimental class utilized project-based learning, while the control class followed a manual from a textbook. The data presented in this section were gathered from the pre-test and post-test scores of both classes. This data is illustrated in two tables: Table 2 displays the scores of the experimental class, and Table 3 presents the scores of the control class.

The Data of Experiment Class

Table 2. Score of Pre-test and Post-test of Experiment Class

(Students)	Pre-test	Post-test	Gained Score
X			(X)
1	60	85	25
2	70	80	10
3	65	70	5
4	75	80	5
5	65	65	0
6	55	85	30
7	85	85	0
8	40	70	30
9	40	40	0
10	50	70	20
11	65	75	10

(Students) X	Pre-test	Post-test	Gained Score (X)
12	80	75	-5
13	65	75	10
14	75	90	15
15	45	85	40
16	65	80	15
17	75	95	20
18	55	75	20
19	80	85	5
20	85	90	5
21	65	55	-10
22	65	95	30
23	75	95	20
24	70	95	25
25	65	80	15
26	95	100	5
27	50	75	25
28	65	70	5
29	85	100	15
30	60	90	30
31	70	90	20
32	65	70	5
33	75	85	10
34	45	80	35
35	40	70	30
Σ	2110	2630	520
(Mean)	60.28	75.14	14.85

From the analysis of scores in the experimental class, it is evident that among the 35 students, the mean score for the pre-test was 60.28, while the mean for the post-test was 75.14, resulting in a mean gain of 13.85. According to the table, the highest pre-test score was 95, achieved by one student, and the lowest was 35, recorded by three students. The difference between the highest and lowest pre-test scores was 60, indicating variability before treatment with authentic materials. In the post-test, the highest score reached 100, attained by two students, while the lowest score remained at 35 for one student. This comparison of pre-test and post-test scores suggests a positive impact of using authentic materials on students' reading comprehension of short functional texts.

The Data of Control Class

Table 3. Score of Pre-test and Post-test of Control Class

(Students) Y	Pre-test	Post-test	Gained score (Y)
1	60	70	10
2	85	90	5
3	85	80	-5
4	95	90	-5
5	85	100	15
6	75	90	15
7	80	90	10
8	85	90	5
9	65	70	5
10	60	70	10
11	80	100	20
12	80	95	15
13	60	55	-5
14	75	80	5
15	65	95	30
16	75	85	10
17	90	100	10
18	80	80	0
19	65	65	0
20	80	80	0
(Students) Y	Pre-test	Post-test	Gained score (Y)
22	70	65	-5
23	60	90	30
24	70	90	20
25	85	85	0
26	65	80	15
27	55	70	15
28	45	70	25
29	50	55	5
30	55	70	15
31	80	100	20
32	45	55	10
33	50	40	-10

34	70	80	10
35	55	50	-5
Σ	2295	2600	305
(Mean)	65.57	74.28	8.71

From the score analysis of the control class, it is apparent that among the 35 students, the mean pre-test score was 65.57, while the mean post-test score was 74.28, resulting in a mean gain of 8.21. The lowest pre-test score was 45, achieved by two students, and the highest was 95, obtained by one student. Following the treatment that did not involve authentic materials, the post-test was administered. The post-test results indicated that the lowest score was 35, recorded by one student, while the highest score was 100, reached by four students. Comparing the data from Tables 2 and 3, it can be concluded that there was a positive effect on teaching reading comprehension of functional texts through the use of authentic materials.

The Analysing of the Data

Before calculating the t value of the observation, the researcher would like to calculate gain (d).

Table 4. the Result of Comparison of the Experiment and Control Class

Students' Identification	Experiment Class	Controlled Class	X (X - MX)	Y (Y - MX)	x ²	y ²
1	25	10	10.15	1.29	103.0225	1.6641
2	10	5	-4.85	-3.71	23.5225	13.7641
3	5	-5	-9.85	-13.71	97.0225	187.9641
4	5	-5	-9.85	-13.71	97.0225	187.9641
5	0	15	-14.85	6.29	220.5225	39.5641
6	30	15	15.15	6.29	229.5225	39.5641
7	0	10	-14.85	1.29	220.5225	1.6641
8	30	5	15.15	-3.71	229.5225	13.7641
9	0	5	-14.85	-3.71	220.5225	13.7641
10	20	10	5.15	1.29	26.5225	1.6641
11	10	20	-4.85	11.29	23.5225	127.4641
12	-5	15	-19.85	6.29	394.0225	39.5641
13	10	-5	-4.85	-13.71	23.5225	187.9641
14	15	5	0.15	-3.71	0.0225	13.7641
15	40	30	25.15	21.29	632.5225	453.2641
16	15	10	0.15	1.29	0.0225	1.6641
17	20	10	5.15	1.29	26.5225	1.6641
18	20	0	5.15	-8.71	26.5225	75.8641

19	5	0	-9.85	-8.71	97.0225	75.8641
20	5	0	-9.85	-8.71	97.0225	75.8641
21	-10	10	-24.85	1.29	617.5225	1.6641
22	30	-5	15.15	-13.71	229.5225	187.9641
23	20	30	5.15	21.29	26.5225	453.2641
24	25	20	10.15	11.29	103.0225	127.4641
25	15	0	0.15	-8.71	0.0225	75.8641
26	5	15	-9.85	6.29	97.0225	39.5641
27	25	15	10.15	6.29	103.0225	39.5641
Students' Identification	Experiment Class	Controlled Class	X (X - MX)	Y (Y - MX)	x ²	y ²
28	5	25	-9.85	16.29	97.0225	265.3641
29	15	5	0.15	-3.71	0.0225	13.7641
30	30	15	15.15	6.29	229.5225	39.5641
31	20	20	5.15	11.29	26.5225	127.4641
32	5	10	-9.85	1.29	97.0225	1.6641
33	10	-10	-4.85	-18.71	23.5225	350.0641
34	35	10	20.15	1.29	406.0225	1.6641
35	30	-5	15.15	-13.71	229.5225	187.9641
	$\sum X = 520$	$\sum Y = 305$	$\sum x = 0.25$	$\sum y = 0.15$	$\sum x^2 = 5074.2875$	$\sum y^2 = 3467.1435$

Homogeneity Test

From the data above, it could be calculated:

1. Standard of deviation X: 12.04
2. Standard of deviation Y: 9.95
3. F (h): $\frac{12.04}{9.95} : 1.21$
4. F table: N 35-1: 34, significance level 5%: 1.76
5. F (h) < F table: 1.21 < 1.76 : Homogeneous

Independent T-Test

The Formula of T-test was expressed as follows:

$$t_0 = \frac{M1 - M2}{SEm1 - m2}$$

Determining T0 with formula:

$$\begin{aligned}t_0 &= \frac{M_1 - M_2}{SEm_1 - m_2} \\ &= \frac{14.85 - 8.71}{2.67} \\ &= \frac{6.14}{2.67} = 2.11\end{aligned}$$

Determining Degrees of Freedom (df), with formula:

$$\begin{aligned}df &= (N_1 + N_2) - 2 \\ &= (35 + 35) - 2 = 68\end{aligned}$$

2. Discussion

The value of df 68 at a significance level of 5% for the t-table was 1.66. According to the formula, the statistical calculation yielded a t_0 value of 2.11. Since the t-test value (t_0) of 2.11 is greater than the t-table value (t_t) of 1.66, this indicates that $t_0 > t_t$ ($2.11 > 1.66$). This means that the t-test score exceeded the t-table score. As a result, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted, and the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected. From this analysis, we can conclude that teaching writing through project-based learning is more effective than using a manual or textbook.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted with first-grade students at MA Al Misri Curahmalang Rambipuji, it can be concluded that project-based learning was effective in enhancing students' writing skills. The statistical analysis revealed a t_0 value of 2.11, while the t-table value at a 5% significance level with 68 degrees of freedom was 1.66. The comparison showed that t_0 was greater than the t-table value ($2.11 > 1.66$). Consequently, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted, and the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected. This indicates that project-based learning effectively supports writing skills development. Both students and teachers can utilize this approach to enhance writing proficiency. By adopting best practices and innovative methodologies, educators can help students become confident, skilled, and culturally aware global citizens (Nahidin, 2024). The researcher examined the effectiveness of this teaching method and how various media contribute to understanding the material presented (Yuswandari, 2024).

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